

## PRESENTATION OF THE ACADEMY PLAQUE TO MISS JANET DOE \*

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NOT long after Dr. Archibald Malloch became librarian at the Academy he persuaded Miss Janet Doe to leave her post as assistant librarian of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and to come to the Academy as head of the Periodicals Department. Three years later she became assistant librarian at the Academy and served in that post for two decades, despite many flattering offers elsewhere. When Dr. Malloch retired in 1949 she became librarian and served until her retirement in 1956.

Her influence on our library during a span of 30 years was very large. Her years as librarian were critical times, when the postwar explosion in scientific knowledge and the resultant great increase in the literature had a traumatic impact on all medical libraries. No longer could one collection be encyclopedic. No longer could one library accept every donation, no matter how massive, with the expectation of supplying quantities of duplicate volumes to less affluent institutions here and abroad. In one year, 1949, which was Miss Doe's first year as our chief librarian, that material—going near and far, indeed as far as Chile—was measured not just in thousands of volumes, but in tons.

Miss Doe's influence extended far beyond the walls of the Academy. This personal prestige, of course, reflected honor upon us. Miss Doe served four years as secretary of the Medical Library Association, and in 1948-1949 was president of that association. She prepared the first edition of the *Handbook Of Medical Library Practice* and also edited the second edition of that work. She received from the Medical Library Association its highest honor—the Marcia C. Noyes Award. Each year since 1967 at the annual convention of the Medical Library Association the highlight of the week is a banquet featuring the Janet Doe Lecture.

The annual convention of the Medical Library Association held in

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JANET DOE

New York City in 1971 was the last meeting that Miss Doe attended of the association which she had served so long. It was the first such meeting for one young woman who had just finished a year's internship in a medical school library. When asked what had meant the most to her during the convention she replied thoughtfully, "meeting and talking to Miss Doe." This occurred 15 years after Miss Doe had retired. Such is the esteem, even reverence, in which she has long been held by medical librarians everywhere. Her name and that of the Academy library, almost synonymous, signified high standards and a dedication to service and to generous sharing. In the 1950 annual report of the library she wrote "The possession of an outstanding accumulation of the scientific literature brings with it a certain moral obligation to see that its resources are accessible to all who need them. . . . Further, it [the Academy] has believed wholeheartedly in the practice of mutual help among libraries as the surest way to advance the interests of all."

Miss Doe is also a scholar. Her *Bibliography of the Works of Ambroise Paré* (Chicago, 1937) is an important part of our History of Medicine Series. One reviewer wrote of this "strikingly fine work" that she "vitalized her bibliography by discussing the subject of it in relation to his [Paré's] books and the books in relation to the time, place and circumstances which brought them forth. Her entries are full, leisurely and discursive, providing a history of the several texts in their transmission to readers and students throughout a period of nearly four centuries, laying bibliographical ghosts, correcting earlier misstatements, and, in general, doing a definitive job. . . ."

Today we have a new world of electronic and photographic marvels, and librarianship seems less engrossed in scholarship and personal service. Yet there is no reason why, in adapting to the new, there should be any need to sacrifice the best of the old: the high standards, the dedicated service, and the generous sharing. Today the Academy and its library staff happily continue the same high purposes that Miss Doe exemplified, part of a tradition observed and supported for many years. As we honor her tonight and stress her contributions, her remarkable influence on this library and others, there is no one who needs to be convinced, except Janet Doe herself, for her modesty is legendary.

And so it is a special pleasure to present Janet Doe with the plaque of The New York Academy of Medicine in recognition of outstanding service to the Academy.